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SB 1201



## **AARP Testimony to the Public Health Committee**

**March 23, 2011**

**Regarding S.B. 1201**

With nearly 600,000 members 50+ in Connecticut and nearly 40 million members nationally, AARP supports the intent of SB 1201. We believe SB 1201 will empower consumers to be better equipped to be real partners in their personal health care. In order to be a real partner, AARP believes consumers must be able to access their personal health information conveniently and affordably. Consumers also should be able to share their health information with the medical professions providing their health care without burdensome processes or unreasonable fees. This is especially important for consumers with chronic health care conditions, but we believe this is a right that all consumers have to their personal health information and how it is used.

AARP supports the intent of this proposed legislation which is to allow patients, who are the subject of laboratory testing, as well as any licensed provider the patient designates, to have direct access to laboratory test results. We also understand that the intent of this bill is to permit physicians to have easier access to results of laboratory tests on patients under their care, where the tests have been ordered by other physicians treating the patient. Connecticut is one of the very few states which explicitly prohibits anyone other than the ordering practitioner to receive test results directly from the clinical laboratory. The result is that patients do not have convenient access to vital health information, their health care providers may not have all the information they need to provide quality care, and this often results in costly and unnecessary duplicate testing.

The current Connecticut law also was enacted before the existence of health information exchanges and other electronic advances, and this legislation should enable eHealth CT and the Health Information Technology Exchange of Connecticut to successfully implement their programs.

We believe that once this bill has been redrafted, it will remove needless barriers to access to laboratory test results for both patients and medical specialists. Availability of all of a patient's laboratory results will decrease ordering of repeat or unnecessary tests, lowering costs and improving patient care.

AARPs look forward to working with you on the final language of SB 1201 and your efforts to improve current Connecticut state law that will result in much improved patient care while lowering costs for consumers, medical practitioners, and Connecticut tax payers.